

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2020

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Rappahannock Area Health Department Offers Free Flu Vaccinations
Drive-Thru Event in Ruther Glen on October 14

(Fredericksburg, Va.)— Getting a flu vaccine is the single best way to protect against the flu, and is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) will conduct public health emergency exercises offering free flu shots Wednesday, October 14 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. at Wright's Chapel UMC (8063 Ladysmith Rd, Ruther Glen, VA). This will be a drive-thru event and all safety precautions will be observed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This event offers free quadrivalent flu vaccines (covers four types of flu) to residents ages 9 and up, from the convenience of your vehicle. Vaccine supplies are limited and will be available on a first- come, first- served basis until the end time of the event, or until the supply of flu vaccine runs out. Please wear a mask and short-sleeved shirt or sleeves that roll up for easy access to the upper arm.

The purpose of this exercise is to simulate mass vaccination events in which the health department and local agencies would work together so community members could be vaccinated efficiently during a time of emergency. Rappahannock Medical Reserve Corps volunteers will assist health department staff with this exercise. The vaccine is provided by the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Emergency Preparedness.

"This year it is more important than ever to get a flu shot," said RAHD Acting Director Dr. Denise Bonds. "According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 will likely continue into the fall and winter and may overlap with the flu season. With the possibility of both viruses being in our communities at the same time, it is vital that everyone age 6 months or older get their yearly flu shot."

"Other prevention measures include practicing good hygiene by frequently washing your hands or using alcohol-based sanitizers when water is unavailable," Dr. Bonds added. "Always cover your cough and sneezes, stay at home when you are sick, and limit your contact with others who are sick."

The CDC estimates that each year over the last decade, influenza has caused 9 to 45 million illnesses, 140,000 to 810,000 hospitalizations and 12,000 to 61,000 deaths.

For more information about the flu, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/ or www.flu.gov. For more information about the Rappahannock Area Health District, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/Rappahannock.

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Please note: news media access to this event is available ONLY by advance request and appointment. Access will be escorted, for the purposes of limited photography and videography from a distance. These measures are necessary to ensure patient privacy and operational security. For more information and to request news media access, contact Allison Balmes-John, allison.balmes@vdh.virginia.gov